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- ART. I.—1. *Military Laws of the United States, to which is prefixed the Constitution of the United States. Compiled and published under Authority of the War Department.* By TRUEMAN CROSS. Washington, 1825. 8vo. pp. 279.
2. *Documents from the Department of War, accompanying the President's Message to Congress at the Commencement of the First Session of the Nineteenth Congress.* Washington, 1825. pp. 92.

THE volume, whose title we have prefixed to this article, contains a complete code of our army legislation, from the commencement of the government, down to the present time. As this code exhibits the best history of our military policy, which can be attained, we have thought that a rapid review of the various acts it embraces would be neither uninteresting nor uninstrusive. The mere fact, that our military establishments have been the result of popular legislation, has a novelty in it, which should command attention. In the older countries of the world, the army forms an essential part of the royal authority, and is often augmented or diminished without reference to the wishes, ability, or wants of the people.

Our venerable fathers, in framing the constitution of the United States, reversed the principles upon which military establishments had been founded for ages. They acted upon the

conviction, that the power of declaring war, and of creating the means of defence and offence, those high attributes of sovereignty, upon the due exercise of which depend the welfare and often the existence of nations, should reside with those, who have the deepest interest at stake, and who are the least likely to abuse it. Accordingly they placed it in the hands of the representatives of the people, that so the military force of the country, instead of being the creature of an arbitrary and irresponsible will, should be the offspring of the same popular and deliberate legislation, which originates every other measure connected with the general good.

Jealousy of military power has ever been a practical feeling in this country. Its influence was felt by the colonies, and was among the exciting causes of the Revolution; and it required all the difficulties, and even occasional desperation of the struggle, to restrain it from embarrassing all the measures of the war. The continental Congress, it is true, standing on high and central ground, and comprehending the full responsibility of the cause it was directing, often gave signal proofs of an elevation above all narrow prejudices, when the fate of that cause was in jeopardy; and once or twice confided to General Washington an almost dictatorial power.

The war of the Revolution ended in 1783. In April, 1785, the military establishment of the United States was fixed at one regiment of infantry, and two companies of artillery, or about 800 men. Thus the nation, two years after a protracted and exasperated struggle with one of the most powerful kingdoms of Europe, while most important relations were still unsettled, and with a host of unquiet and formidable neighbors upon its interior frontiers, whose excited spirits could not subside into peace, like those of more civilized nations, at the bidding of a treaty, stood nearly divested of every means of organized defence. While we recognise a strong cause of this abandonment of self protection, in the exhausted condition of the country, we may likewise discern in it that cautious policy, pushed somewhat to an extreme, which regarded soldiers as useless and even dangerous, when not required for immediate service.

About two years after this period, the military establishment was augmented by 700 men, and remained thus until 1790, when, under the new constitution, it was fixed at one regiment of infantry, and one battalion of artillery, embracing 1216 men. The President was at the same time authorized to call into service

such militia, for the defence of the frontiers, as he might deem necessary. In 1791 the establishment was again increased by the addition of another regiment of infantry, and the President was empowered to raise 2000 *levies*, as they were termed, in lieu of the militia he had before been authorized to call out. In 1792, the infantry was still further augmented by three additional regiments, one of which was so organized, as to embrace a squadron of four troops of light dragoons. In 1794 eight hundred men were added to the artillery, which was thenceforward to be styled the Corps of Artillerists and Engineers. These several additions to the establishment fixed in 1790, formed a force of about 6000. They who are familiar with the history of those times, will recollect, that it was a period of constant and increasing hostility with the Indians, who, as we have before remarked, did not bury the tomahawk, at the general pacification which terminated the Revolution. Our frontiers were drenched with the blood of our unprotected settlers. General Washington, then President, at each session of Congress, reiterated his strong and eloquent representations of these barbarities, and urged the necessity of investing the Executive with power to protect the defenceless and chastise the aggressors. But a distrustful and improvident policy, which seemed to perceive no danger so great, as that which might arise from placing an army at the disposal of the Executive, dealt out the means of defence with such a sparing hand, that it was not until one or two abortive campaigns, and two or three defeats, marked with unprecedented carnage, showed the irresistible necessity of more liberal and vigorous measures, that the President was enabled to bring the war to a successful close. But it was not from the Indians alone that we at that time had danger to apprehend. Our seaboard was not secure from insult; and the angry re- crimination, which then marked our negotiations with Great Britain, whose navies governed the ocean, admonished us that we were too vulnerable on that frontier. The President was accordingly directed by the act of March, 1794, to fortify the principal ports on the coast. Twenty different points were indicated by the act, among which, it appears, 350 pieces of ordnance were to be distributed. The President was about the same time directed to establish three or four arsenals, with magazines and armories connected with them.*

* There are now in the United States, two national armories, and

In May, 1796, the military establishment was again fixed, embracing the corps of artillerists and engineers, two companies of light dragoons, and four regiments of infantry, or about 3000 men. This establishment continued the same throughout the remainder of General Washington's administration. Mr Adams came to the presidency amid the growing troubles with France, and his administration was marked from its commencement to the termination of these troubles, with frequent and extensive augmentations of the military force. The alarm of the nation was doubtless great; and the confidence of Congress in the Executive appears to have been in proportion. It was a striking conversion from the chary and mistrustful policy of 1792 and 1793, when an enemy, covering our very thresholds with slaughter, could induce only tardy and scanty measures of defence, to the confiding liberality of this period, when, in order to resist an enemy, not yet openly declared, and separated from us by the Atlantic, the nerve and strength of the nation were placed at the disposal of the Executive.

In April, 1798, an additional regiment of artillerists and engineers was raised; and in the following month, the President was invested with power to raise, during the recess of Congress, 10,000 men for the term of three years, and to accept of any company or companies of volunteers, which might be offered for service. The latter clause would appear to have conferred a power commensurate with the force of the entire militia, provided the spirit of volunteering had prevailed to that extent. About one year after this, the President was conditionally authorized, in the language of the act, 'to organize and cause to be

eleven national arsenals. The armories are at Springfield, Massachusetts, and at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. The arsenals are at Waretown, Massachusetts; Watervliet and Rome, New York; Baltimore, Maryland; Washington, District of Columbia; Richmond, Virginia; Augusta, Georgia; Frankford and Pittsburg, Pennsylvania; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and Detroit, Michigan Territory. Arms and accoutrements are manufactured at the two armories, 79,259 of the former having been made in the course of the last three years. Accoutrements, gun carriages, &c. are made at many of the arsenals, while some of them are used merely as depots. There are no public foundries for ordnance, the supply being obtained by contracts from private foundries, of which there are a sufficient number in the United States to answer all demands. Lead is obtained in ample quantities from the public mines.

raised,* an additional military force, to consist of twentyfour regiments of infantry, one regiment and one battalion of riflemen, a battalion of artillerists and engineers, and three regiments of cavalry. The same act limited the number of volunteers which could be accepted by the President under the indefinite act of 1798, to 75,000. The amount of force, including regulars and militia, which the several foregoing acts empowered President Adams to raise, under certain exigencies, supposed no doubt to exist, considerably exceeded 100,000 men.

The difficulties with France were adjusted in 1800, when this formidable army was reduced to four regiments of infantry, two regiments of artillerists and engineers, and two troops of light dragoons. Again, in 1802, under the pacific auspices with which Mr Jefferson had begun his administration, the military establishment was still further diminished, being fixed at one regiment of artillerists, two regiments of infantry, and a corps of engineers, or about 3,000 men. By the same act, the engineers, being formed into a separate corps, were stationed at West Point, and made to constitute a military academy, thus laying the foundation of that excellent institution, which is now flourishing with so much credit and usefulness to the country. We shall not now pause to indulge ourselves in such remarks, as this allusion to its origin might naturally suggest.

No change was made in the force of the military establishment from 1802 till nearly the close of Mr Jefferson's administration. In April, 1808, our disputes with Great Britain having become aggravated by several incidents, which particularly affected the interest and honor of the country, an additional military force was authorized, to consist of five regiments of infantry, one regiment of light artillery, and one regiment of light dragoons, augmenting the establishment already on foot by about 6000. The act creating this augmentation, contained a clause, which required that every officer, appointed under it, should 'be a citizen of the United States, or,' as it adds with superfluous precision, 'one of the territories thereof.' Previously to this time, many foreigners had been introduced into our service, some of whom, it is believed, had not even taken the oath of allegiance. The recruiting under this act was suspended about a year after-

* The inversion of phraseology here exhibited, is one among the many proofs, which might be selected, to show the great looseness of the language used in our military legislation.

ward, in consequence probably of the arrangement with Mr Erskine, the British minister, and was not renewed, although this arrangement was soon disavowed and annulled, until within about six months before the declaration of war. Shortly after this renewal, early in 1812, Congress passed an act, authorizing an additional military force of 25,000 men, to consist of ten regiments of infantry, two regiments of artillery, and one regiment of light dragoons. In the beginning of 1813, twenty additional regiments of infantry, or 20,000 men, were authorized ; and in the beginning of 1814, three additional regiments of riflemen. No further augmentations were made to the regular force during the war.

It would appear from the foregoing acts, that the nominal regular force on foot, during the war of 1812, was between 60,000 and 70,000. It is not probable, however, that the establishment ever approximated to an efficient fulness. The recruiting service held out powerful inducements to enlist, the bounties having been enlarged, until the recruit, besides his monthly pay of eight dollars, was offered fifty dollars when enlisted, an additional fifty when mustered, and twentyfour dollars and 320 acres of land at the expiration of his term of service ; and we believe there was no want of men ; but the pressing exigencies of the war, transferring the raw soldier immediately from the rendezvous to the scene of action, left no time for the operation of that preliminary discipline, which gives cohesion and permanency to a body of men. Hence battalions, which marched from the rendezvous complete as to numbers, before they reached the frontiers were often reduced to meagre detachments.

Peace was ratified with Great Britain in February, 1815 ; and among the subjects which first engaged the attention of Congress, was that of reducing the army to the proper standard of peace. Accordingly, on the third of March following, the military establishment was fixed at 10,000 men. Again, in 1821, it was still further reduced, being diminished to 6000, which is the number on foot at the present time.

Such is a brief sketch of the legislation, which has affected the numerical force of our army, from the commencement of our government. It is a dry statement, but it suggests some interesting reflections. The manner in which the country threw off its armor at the close of the Revolution, and stood among the nations of the earth, probably a solitary instance, without any organized means of defence ; although it bore the semi-

blance of a high degree of self confidence and moral energy, yet was doubtless more the result of a weak and exhausted government, and of a deep rooted aversion to military establishments in time of peace, than of any sound calculations of economy, or just notions of national defence. The wisdom of that enlightened period could not have been deluded by a belief, that the causes of hostility among states had ceased to operate upon earth, or that the mere reputation of having struggled, however nobly, for independence, would be a sufficient panoply of strength. We soon had abundant proofs, that we were liable to collisions and injuries. But it required time and experience to correct that tendency to extremes, which marked many of the strong and salutary prejudices of the Revolution. Perhaps a more imposing array of national defence might not have averted the troubles which gathered about us; but we may be allowed to suppose, that manifestations of greater vigor, and an attitude more likely to command respect, would in some degree have restrained that spirit of insult and aggression, which visited us with wrongs from the close of the Revolution down to the late war.

The reluctant and tardy grants of military force, during the administration of General Washington, may be said to have cost the nation much blood and treasure; and to have inculcated a lesson, which appears to have reached with great force the policy of the succeeding administration. We have already had occasion to remark upon the liberality, with which Congress called out the force of the nation under President Adams; and there is no doubt that this liberality produced a new reaction on the policy of his successor, who came into power over the prostrated and unpopular measures, which had distinguished this agitated and eventful administration. Mr Jefferson's policy was preeminently pacific. The small military establishment fixed in 1800, was still further reduced in 1802; and the system of Mr Jefferson's measures appears to have aimed at practically proving, that the objects usually sought for by an appeal to arms, could be attained short of that *ultima ratio regum*. But this illustrious republican calculated too largely upon a self denying patriotism, which probably never existed in any nation. Had his expanded and philanthropic designs been faithfully seconded by every class of citizens, the final result, as it respects the security of rights and the redress of wrongs, might have been as favorable, as that which followed the subsequent war. To have severed all connexion with the belligerents of Europe, and with-

drawn for a season from the ocean, would have involved immense sacrifices of national wealth ; but the alternative of war could hardly encourage a hope of less sacrifice, independent of the waste of human lives. As the experiment failed, it was doubtless an injury to the country. It did not avert, it only postponed a war, while it greatly diminished the resources essential to its prosecution. Besides, it may be questioned whether, among the jostling nations of the earth, such a noncombatant system ever can be successful. The nation, that should always be found, as soon as belligerent conflicts begin to trouble the ocean, abandoning all the pursuits of commerce, rather than defending them by the sword, would, we apprehend, become the common mark of insult and cupidity. Prudence would be mistaken for pusillanimity, and, in the end, either the ocean must be abandoned, or the common right there maintained in the usual way. There is no axiom better settled, than that a nation, in order to prosper, must be respected ; and, in order to be respected, it must be determined and prepared to defend itself.

The want of due preparation, before the commencement of the last war, has been the subject of much animadversion. If the preparation to meet the anticipated conflict of 1799, under Mr Adams, was more than commensurate with the danger, that for the war of 1812 would seem to have fallen into the other extreme. And there was less excuse in the latter case, as the time of opening hostilities was chosen by ourselves. We are not unmindful of the often alleged unfitness of a government, constituted like ours, for prompt and efficacious preparation for war. Compared with monarchical governments, it is, in these respects, far behind ; and it is no doubt true, that in proportion as a government recedes from despotism, it loses in a degree its military efficiency. But this applies to preliminary movements, and more particularly to the power of masking them from the public, than to operations subsequent to declared hostilities. It is certain, that nothing can be done secretly in this country, and we could never expect to find an enemy unaware of our force and general intentions ; but we can perceive no obstacle to any extent of open preparation. At the crisis we allude to, every fort could have been forewarned of the expected contest, and prepared to meet it, as we had a respectable force on foot, well officered and disciplined. Both upon the maritime and interior frontier, the rust of a long peace could have been rubbed off, and a spirit infused into the garrisons, suited to the approaching

change. But we believe the newspapers alone conveyed to the army the signs of the times, and that every post rested in undisturbed repose, until awakened by the President's proclamation of war, perhaps conveyed through the same channel, or communicated by the enemy in a summons to surrender.

The military establishment recommended by the Executive, at the peace of 1815, to be reserved out of the army then on foot, was 20,000 men. It will be recollected, that the war had disturbed nearly all the Indian tribes on our interior frontier; and that, through the agency of the British, or from their native proneness to war (the United States having at first refused to accept their services), most of them were actively engaged against us. The peace with Great Britain had only nominally pacified many of her red allies, and it was believed, that nothing but an imposing force in their neighborhood would restrain them within the bounds of peace. Under these considerations, the above force was not deemed too great for the security of the country. But Congress determined that half this number would be sufficient; and the result has not proved that their estimate was wrong.

In 1821, our relations with the Indians, as well as with the European nations, having become settled, and confirmed by a peace of some duration, the same authority determined, that 6000 men were an establishment adequate to answer all the demands of the public service, simplifying the organization by suppressing the light artillery and riflemen, corps which served rather to diversify, than to improve our means of defence. This establishment, although small for our widely extended frontier, is probably sufficient for the purposes of peace, and may be made to embrace within itself the power of expansion, to meet even the exigencies of war. In 1812, we had a force on foot of about the same numbers as at present, many of the officers of which had been in commission since the formation of the government, and most of them had the experience of some years' discipline. Had an additional force been ingrafted on this establishment, thus diffusing the existing science and practice throughout the whole mass, we should no doubt have begun hostilities with greater chances of success. Our present army is susceptible of great enlargement, without any increase of regimental officers, or losing much of its immediate efficiency.

But an additional army, organized in any manner, would not now be subjected to the disadvantages which existed in 1812.

At that time it may be said there was no established system either of tactics, discipline, or administration. Steuben's work, the manual of the Revolution, had been suffered to sink into disuse, and its place had been supplied by such a selection from more modern systems, as suited the taste or caprice of any officer. And the regulations were *lex non scripta*, founded only in usages, or orders, which were no longer accessible. Thus the officers of new regiments raised in 1812 were left almost entirely to conjecture, as to every point of duty. Two attempts were made early in the war to introduce new systems of infantry tactics, both of which appear to have been only partially successful. A resolution passed Congress early in 1813, 'requiring a military system of discipline for the infantry of the army and militia of the United States' to be prepared. A board of officers was constituted, which compiled a system of *Infantry Tactics*, from the most modern and approved works, which was adopted, and has since been the guide of the army.* But this was not supplying all the desiderata of the army. The artillery, a most important branch of our national defence, was, and, it is believed, always had been, without any established guide; and, as we have before remarked, there was no system of police and general regulations. Both these deficiencies were supplied in 1821. A Treatise on Artillery, by General Lallemand, an officer of distinguished reputation from the French service, was then adopted by the President for the service of the United States; and during the same year, a *System of General Regulations* was compiled by Major General Scott, from the French and English services, which has since been enforced throughout the army. The circle of systems for the various branches of our service may now be considered complete, and, whatever may be their minor defects, they must, if properly enforced, produce uniformity and comparative efficiency.

In looking over these Military Laws, it is impossible not to be struck with the want of regularity and congruity, which prevails throughout our army legislation. There are scarcely any two laws, although they have precisely the same objects in view, which are alike. This irregularity is particularly conspicuous in everything that relates to organization, in which, above all other things connected with the army, a sameness, so far as is compatible with the service, should be preserved. If it were a crude sub-

* This system was revised in 1824.

ject, on which innovation might exercise its caprice, in the hope of improving upon the past, there would be a better excuse. But the organization of companies, regiments, brigades, divisions, &c. has been long settled by experience, and in all its essential parts has taken a permanency of character, which will probably not be materially changed as long as the present mode of arming troops obtains; and any *uniform* organization, which adheres to established principles, is good. In illustration of the foregoing remarks, it is only necessary to cite the history of any one corps. For instance, the following are the mutations and permutations of the artillery. In 1790, it was organized as a battalion of four companies, commanded by a major; in 1794, it was enlarged, became denominated the corps of artillerists and engineers, and had one lieutenant colonel, four majors, and sixteen captains; in 1798, another regiment was added, having however only three battalions; in 1799, a battalion was added; in 1802, the whole was consolidated into one regiment, having one colonel, one lieutenant colonel, four majors, and twenty captains, the engineers forming a separate corps; in 1812, two additional regiments were raised, differing from the one already on foot, in having two lieutenant colonels each, and only two majors; in 1814, it again changed its form, and became a corps, having six lieutenant colonels, six majors, and fortyeight captains; and again in 1821, it underwent its last transformation, being once more arranged into regiments after the usual mode.

We do not pretend to determine which of the various organizations exhibited in the course of these shiftings was the best, but we presume an adherence to the principles of any one of them, would have been preferable to such capricious changes; and we certainly can see no excuse for allowing different parts of the same corps to present the absurdity of dissimilar organization. The increase and the diminution of an army are perfectly feasible, without disturbing the principles of uniformity. Forbearing to adduce the instance of other corps, which exhibit nearly the same incongruities, we will only advert to the general organization of the army at the beginning of the late war. To pass over the artillery, of which we have already spoken, we had two regiments of light dragoons, one of them consisting of one colonel, one lieutenant colonel, one major, and eight captains; the other, of one colonel, two lieutenant colonels, two majors, and ten captains. In the infantry, there were seven regiments, each having one colonel, one lieutenant colonel, one

major, and ten captains ; and ten other regiments, each of which had one colonel, two lieutenant colonels, two majors, and eighteen captains. This discordant and unmanageable organization was corrected in some degree, a few months afterwards, by dividing the unwieldy regiments of the new establishment. It is difficult to account for such eccentricity of legislation, except by supposing that, in framing a new act, no reference was ever made to older acts ; or, that harmony of organization was deemed of too little moment to merit attention. It has been considered important to the effective cooperation of the militia with the regular troops, that the former should assume an organization as conformable as possible with that of the latter. But which of the Protean shapes, in which our army has appeared throughout the last thirty years, should we expect the militia to adopt ?

Much the same animadversions could justly be applied to all the other branches of our army legislation. No fixed rules or established principles appear to have been adopted in any case. And we were not without standards and precedents, for the war of the Revolution had introduced the most approved modes of military service, and ingrafted them upon our country. Baron Steuben was a thorough bred disciplinarian of the Frederick school, and through his useful agency, and by an association with the French army, the best practices of Europe had become familiarized to General Washington's army. Many improvements have been made since that period ; but these relate to armament and evolutions, rather than to organization. The division and subdivision of troops, best suited to their mobility and the convenience of command, the proportion of officers, and their relative rank, the separation and arrangement of staff duties, have all remained essentially the same.

A consideration of the foregoing subjects naturally leads our attention to the present *system of fortifications*, which is essentially connected with the army. At the beginning of the Revolution there were but few fortifications upon our maritime frontier. Castle William, in Boston harbor, was doubtless in good condition when it fell into our hands ; and it was probably the only work, that could be of much service to us, for which we were indebted to the mother country. Early in 1776, the necessity of an increased maritime defence was felt by the continental Congress, and in March of that memorable year, a committee was appointed, ' to consider of the fortifying one or more posts on the American coasts, in the strongest manner, for the

protection of our cruisers and the reception of their prizes.' We have not ascertained which of the humble works, that afterwards became distinguished for the gallant defences made in them, were erected in pursuance of this resolve. It is not probable that many of them remained at the close of the war, or if they did, that they could be regarded as any security to our coast. Before the peace, the British had made their way into every important harbor of the United States, except Boston; and that place was probably indebted for its protection, more to the temporary presence of the French fleet, than to its castle, or even to its celebrated heights, where the hasty works had

‘Wove like a diadem their tracery round.’

Our seaboard continued in this naked condition until the year 1794, when acts were passed by Congress, directing the principal ports in the United States to be fortified ‘under the direction of the President, at such time or times as he might judge necessary.’ There is a peculiar feature in these acts, which shows the scrupulous precision with which power was meted out to the Executive in those days. Each of them specifies, with an explicit minuteness, which implies that the power was not deemed to result as a matter of course, that the President should be authorized ‘to employ, as garrisons, in the said fortifications, or any of them, such of the troops on the military establishment of the United States, as he might judge necessary.’ The act likewise specifies the quantity and even the calibre of the ordnance, and the number of shot to be provided.

We do not know what works were immediately undertaken in execution of these acts, but, as the first appropriations for this purpose appear not to have been made until about three years afterwards, it is not probable that much was done previously to that time. The more modern mode of legislation in such cases, which begins with an appropriation, seems not then to have been adopted. The amount of the appropriation made at the time alluded to, and the year following, to fulfil the projected plan of fortifying twenty different harbors, or inlets, was three hundred and sixtyfive thousand dollars, being about the cost of some one of the forts belonging to the present system. The residue of the funds was to be supplied by debts due to the United States from individual states, which were to be credited for such labor as they might perform upon works erected for their own defence, provided that the expenditure did not exceed the balance

found and reported against the respective states. Through these united means a few imperfect and perishable works were erected, for the protection of the principal seaports.

The subject of fortifications does not appear again to have attracted the attention of Congress, until after the lapse of ten years, during which time our country had suffered severely in its wounded interests and wounded honor. In the beginning of 1808, an appropriation of one million of dollars was made, to enable the President to repair and finish such works, as had already been completed or begun, and to erect such others, as might be necessary, in the language of the act, to 'afford more effectual protection to our ports and harbors, and preserve therein the respect due to the constituted authorities of the nation.' Under this act, most of the harbors in the United States, of any importance, became fortified. There was much energy and promptitude in the execution of these works, and, as they had been deferred until the moment of urgent necessity, such despatch was indispensable. But the system was probably defective in proportion to this despatch. Time and deliberate calculation are perhaps more requisite in establishing a system of permanent defence, than in any other connected with the welfare of a nation. Haste is utterly incompatible with such a system, which should be founded upon previous surveys, comprehensive and minute, and executed in the most skilful and careful manner. At this time, no general survey of our coast, with a view to a system of defence, had been made. In most instances, such sites were occupied, as had been selected for such purposes in former times. In other cases, slight local examinations determined the choice. These works were generally planned without much regard to the rules of fortification, and constructed of perishable materials. They are now mostly in a state of dilapidation, or have been kept from falling into that state, by frequent and expensive repairs.

There may be many causes assigned for the defects of the system of 1808. It was adopted at a time when probably a two-fold object was in view, that of defending the coast against an enemy, and that of enforcing a series of restrictive measures, which were then operating upon ourselves. Guided by the latter consideration, many works were perhaps erected, which would not have entered into a mere system of external defence. The sum appropriated, likewise, although considerable, yet when divided among so many works, left but a small portion for each.

There was an urgent necessity, however, that the works should be completed ; and of course each was made to correspond, not to the natural demands of the site, or the importance of the place to be defended, but to that portion of the million which fell to its share.

But these works, imperfect and insufficient as they were, afforded much protection to the country during the subsequent war. Few of the harbors, which had these defences, were entered by the enemy. Spoliations and conflagrations, which might else have visited our principal towns, were generally confined to weak and insignificant villages. The same war likewise developed our other vulnerable points, as well as showed the utility of strengthening those, whose slight defences had already proved so beneficial. Under the influence of this experience, soon after peace had been established, a plan of surveys was settled and put in operation, embracing a complete examination of the coast, so far as it could enter into a general system of national defence. Each harbor and bay was accurately and deliberately explored, in regard to its capacity for defence both by land and water ; all the advantages and disadvantages of localities attentively compared ; the magnitude of both the immediate and remote interests to be protected was brought into consideration ; and afterwards, the whole combined into one view, in order to produce a general result.

Upon these surveys and calculations a general system of national defence was formed, which was submitted to Congress in 1819–20, and, after a thorough discussion of its merits, approved. An immediate appropriation was made for its commencement. The number of works proposed to be erected, their position, their dimensions, and probable cost, have all repeatedly been before the public. The reports of the engineers, however, in all their details, although laid before Congress, have never been published. They appear to have been accessible to those, who are called upon to give the system legislative support ; but it has been determined, that they contain much information, which ought not to be spread before the public at large. There can be no mystery with respect to the number and sites of public works, nor could the power of their armament long be concealed ; but there are many other facts connected with a fortification, such as the most accessible points of approach, the nature and resources of the surrounding country, having relation to the attack and defence, which are ascertained only by such topographical

surveys and minute calculations, as men of professional skill and experience alone can make, and which would be invaluable to an enemy, that common prudence would withhold from publicity. From such parts of these reports as have been published, we are able to gather the main results. We cannot better present the full scope of them, than by giving the following extracts.

‘ A defensive system for the frontiers of the United States is therefore yet to be created ; its bases are first, a navy ; second, fortifications ; third, interior communication by land and water ; and fourth, a regular army and well organized militia ; these means must all be combined so as to form a complete system.’

‘ The navy must, in the first place, be provided with proper establishments for construction and repair, harbors of rendezvous, stations and ports of refuge. It is only by taking into view the general character, as well as the details, of the whole frontier, that we can fix on the most advantageous points for receiving these naval depots, harbors of rendezvous, stations, and ports of refuge.’

‘ On these considerations, Burwell’s Bay, in James river, and Charlestown, near Boston, have been especially recommended by the commission, as the most proper sites for the great naval arsenals of the South and of the North. Hampton Roads and Boston Roads as the chief rendezvous, and Narraganset bay as an indispensable accessory to Boston Roads.’

‘ It is also from an attentive consideration of the whole maritime frontier, of the interior, and of the coastwise navigation, that Mobile bay, on the gulf of Mexico, St. Mary’s, in the Chesapeake, the Delaware, New York bay, Buzzard’s bay, New London, Marblehead, Portsmouth, Portland, the mouths of the Kennebec and Penobscot, and Mount Desert bay, have been fixed upon as stations and ports of refuge ; as necessary and essential to our merchant vessels as to our navy.’

‘ Smithville and Beaufort, North Carolina ; Annapolis, Maryland ; New Haven, Connecticut ; Salem, in Massachusetts ; and Wiscasset, have likewise been examined with attention, with a view to secure them from attack by sea and land.’

‘ St Mary’s river and Savannah, in Georgia ; Beaufort, Charleston, and Georgetown, in South Carolina, will be examined in the course of the year.’*

From these extracts it will appear, that the system is founded upon full surveys, and the most comprehensive considerations.

* Engineer Reports, presented to Congress in 1819, 1820, and 1821.

It is in the strictest sense a general and national system of defence ; and the public may now feel an assurance, that all future expenditures will be applied in the most beneficial manner which science and experience can devise, in fulfilment of this system. The works are in a course of gradual completion, their progress being regulated by the resources of the country, and the necessity of a careful and proper execution. It is a season of peace, and there is no urgency for greater despatch than is compatible with these limitations.

By the documents whose title we have prefixed to this article, it is seen that the works proposed by the plan are divided into three classes, corresponding with their immediate and more remote importance. The works embraced in the first class, which are recommended to be commenced as soon as possible, and to be completed as fast as the resources of the country will admit, appear to be twelve in number ; those of the second class, which are recommended not to be commenced until a later period, probably not until those of the first class are completed, are twenty in number ; the third class embraces seven works, to be postponed to a still more remote period.* Some of the works embraced in the first class have already been finished, and others are in the progress of construction. They are intended to protect the principal seaports and avenues of the country ; they constitute the cardinal points of defence, including Boston, Newport, New York, the river Delaware, the Chesapeake, Mobile, and the mouths of the Mississippi. Some works in North Carolina, by the decision of Congress, and not, it appears, by the recommendation of the board of engineers, belong to the same class.

The Delta of the Mississippi, being almost destitute of defence, and concentrating, as it were, the commercial interests of the numerous and populous states, which are watered by the wide spread arms of this mighty river, was among the earliest objects of attention. The work on Mobile point, forming a subsidiary part of the same defence, was of contemporaneous commencement. The importance of securing this extreme and vulnerable point of our Union, was suggested by every sound consideration, and not a little strengthened by recollections of

* In the Revised Report of the Board of Engineers in March last, a *fourth class* is proposed, 'containing such works as will be necessary only conditionally.'

the late war, when invasion approached that quarter with no fear of repulse, and when probably the genius of one man saved the Western country. These fortifications will protect New Orleans, and all the multitudinous interests connected with its safety, from similar invasions in future. Had such defences existed in 1814, it can hardly be doubted, that such an attempt would not have been made. Its weakness, combined with its importance, induced and encouraged the enterprise. We cannot pretend to state the expense attending the defence of that country at the time alluded to. Such a calculation would be imperfect, unless we could include in the estimate the lives which were lost on the occasion by sickness, as well as by the more ordinary cause of mortality in war. It is not improbable, however, that the mere pecuniary loss resulting to the country from this invasion, would have nearly defrayed the cost of the works, which are now erecting for the defence of the Mississippi.

It will be recollected that Congress decided against *one* of the works, proposed by the report of the board of engineers as a part of this defence. There may be an appearance of arrogance in doubting the wisdom of this decision, but we are inclined to believe, that, at some future time, the works on Dauphine Island will be resumed. It was never, we presume, regarded as an immediate defence of any channel or passage, and the depth of its surrounding waters was well ascertained. But in determining the facilities of attack and defence in the gulf of Mexico, the engineers could not have been unmindful, that, to leave a large and salubrious island, on a frontier affording no other insular position of that character, open to the occupation of an enemy, would be voluntarily relinquishing a *point d'appui*, whence a whole coast might be kept in a constant state of alarm; and whence expeditions might move with equal ease and promptitude, against any of its assailable points. The deleterious climate of the gulf of Mexico, when operating upon masses of men crowded in ships, is one of its best protections against an invasion of any duration. But leave a healthy and centrally situated island as a *place d'armes*, as a place of rest and refreshment for an invading force, and this safeguard is rendered almost nugatory.

The other works belonging to the first class, also claiming the earliest attention, were those which defend Hampton Roads, the Delaware; New York, and the harbor of Newport. The high importance of Hampton Roads, which, besides being the outlet of an extensive and valuable local commerce, are the central ren-

deztvous of our merchantmen and navy, has never been misunderstood ; but, under systems of defence which did not look beyond the immediate protection of certain populous places, they have always been left open and free as the common highway of nations. During the late war, however, the advantage of having had a secure place of refuge, in this broad and excellent roadstead, were made too manifest, not to suggest greater precautions for the future. Its accessibleness at all seasons, and with the same wind which wafts a vessel into the mouth of the Chesapeake, combined with its central position upon the Atlantic coast, renders it now, and will render it through all future time, of great moment to the country. Throughout the late war, the enemy held undisturbed possession of these roads ; thus excluding us from the best port of refuge which the country affords, where he could ride securely through all the vicissitudes of the seasons, and whence he could detach an armament, with the greatest facility, to annoy any part of the coast. The two works now under construction for their security will, in all probability, deter any enemy, however powerful, from attempting to pass through them ; and after the additional interior works, proposed in the third class, are finished, the roads would be untenable even by those who might succeed in forcing the outer defences. One of these forts, which is built in the sea, cannot be besieged ; and the other is capable of resisting any force, until relief could arrive.

The defences of the Delaware and of New York, which have in view the protection of two cities of great importance, need no comment. The propriety of arranging them under the first class, and of giving them the earliest attention, admits of no question.

The harbor of Newport, with its ample anchorage and easiness of access at most seasons, is second only to Hampton Roads, as a port of refuge and of rendezvous. Hampton Roads and Newport are the two points which an enemy would choose to seize upon, in order to carry on the most effectual war against us. Such a defence of them, therefore, as may render any enterprise against them hopeless, appears to be an indispensable part of a system of national defence.

The works proposed for the defence of Boston harbor, which enter into the first class, have not yet been commenced, unless it be so far as to secure the islands on which they are to be founded, from the encroachments of the sea. The fortifications already

there, although imperfect and misplaced, yet, assisted by the defensive character which nature has given to the harbor, afford a better protection than was possessed by any other place of equal importance.

Of the works proposed in the second class, some appear to be only subsidiary to those of the first class, intended to render them more effectual; others are of an independent character, such as those which are to be at the mouths of the Potomac and of the Patapsco, those on the coasts of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine. These works, though secondary in importance, form essential parts of the general defence.

The system having been established on minute calculations, the armament required for each work, and the proper complement of troops to man them, both in peace and in war, have been accurately determined. The number of the latter has been fixed at rather less than five thousand men in time of peace, and not quite thirtyeight thousand in time of war. The garrisons, in time of peace, will doubtless always be formed of regular soldiers; but in time of war, a part of each will of course be supplied by the neighboring militia. It is the opinion of General Lallemand, 'that if half the number [of artilleryists] in the field are old soldiers, it is enough;' and the remark would still hold good as to garrison service. These small and well disciplined garrisons will be centres around which the irregular force of the country may gather in a season of danger.

During the late war, the country being comparatively without defence by fortifications, the enemy was able to carry on against us, what Mr McLane very aptly termed, 'a war of threatenings;' that is, by keeping a disposable force at Hampton Roads, and at some other places within striking distance, he kept the whole country in a state of alarm, and immense bodies of militia constantly under arms. Whenever the present system of fortifications shall be completed, all the principal avenues to the country will be strongly guarded. The mass of the population may rest in quietness, until certain demonstrations indicate the point of attack. If this point prove to be any of the fortifications, the siege that must take place will afford ample time for adequate relief. Should more exposed quarters be the object, the force of the country may be directed thither, without any apprehension of danger to more important places, that may be left behind.

The estimated expense of completing the proposed system of

fortifications is about seventeen millions of dollars. It is not improbable, that the expense incurred on account of the militia during the late war, which such a system might have left undisturbed at home, may have nearly equalled this amount. But, if a proper condition of defence were not to be obtained short of even double that amount, a wise and prescient policy would not hesitate to make the appropriation, keeping always within the resources of the country. It is not likely that the most impregnable state of defence would at all times avert a war. But war nowadays is not waged without calculation. Caprice and passion have less influence over these great questions, so momentous to the human race, than formerly. A nation that appears able to defend itself is respected; its rights are not likely to be trampled upon. Hence it is not too much to say that the expenditure of fifteen or twenty millions upon fortifications may avert many wars, each of which might cost, like the last, a hundred millions.

In reviewing the legislation relating to the army, we purposely omitted all remarks upon the *Military Academy at West Point*, believing that a subject of so much interest as this favorite institution of the nation, demanded a separate and more enlarged consideration.

The importance and necessity of some seminary of this kind, where the candidate for a commission in the army passes through a course of preliminary instruction, have been acknowledged in all countries, where the military service has been guided by the scientific rules of war. They have long been established in France and in England, and the most distinguished warrior of this or any other age, as well as his fortunate conqueror, were both *élèves* of military schools.

Our fathers had had some practice in war previously to the Revolution, but they understood little of its science. The propriety, however, of establishing some school, at which the rudiments of an art, every day becoming more important to the cause at issue, could be early infused into the commissioned ranks of the army, did not escape their observation. In October, 1776, the continental Congress resolved that a committee should be appointed, 'to prepare and bring in a plan of a military academy, at the army.' It does not appear that any successful result followed this resolution. The bustle and trying exigencies of such a war as we were then waging, were not propitious to the commencement of institutions of this kind; besides, inferring from

the phrase, 'at the army,' that it was designed to connect it with the camp, we apprehend the intended plan could not have borne much similitude to more modern academies. An ambulatory academy does not accord with our received notions on this subject.

The next attempt to introduce any thing like science into our army appears to have been made in 1794, when, in forming the Corps of Artillerists and Engineers, the President was authorized to provide 'the necessary books, instruments, and apparatus, for the use and benefit of the said corps.' But as these articles were for the use only of officers already commissioned, and engaged in the active duties of their profession, they must have been intended rather as the auxiliaries of practice, than to establish a course of instruction. Indeed, as no point of concentration was fixed for them, such an application of them would have been impracticable.

In fixing the peace establishment in 1802, at the commencement of Mr Jefferson's administration, the engineers were separated from the artillerists, and formed into an independent corps, having attached to it *ten cadets*. The law further enacted, that the corps should be stationed at West Point, and constitute a military academy; that the principal engineer, and, in his absence, the next in rank, should have the superintendence of the said military academy, under the direction of the President of the United States; and the secretary of war was authorized, under the President, 'to procure the necessary books, implements, and apparatus, for the use of the said institution.'

By the same act, two cadets were allowed to each of the twenty companies of artillery retained on the peace establishment; and although no provision appears for attaching these cadets to the Military Academy, yet, it is believed that such of them as were appointed, were sent for instruction to that institution. This is the more probable, as, while the law continued the same, many graduates were appointed to the artillery, and some even to the infantry.

The institution continued under these inadequate provisions, with the exception of the appointment in 1803 of a teacher of French and another of Drawing, until 1812. About ninety cadets had been graduated and commissioned previously to this time. Among these are to be recognised many officers, who were conspicuous during the late war for their skill and gallantry, and who fell honorably in the field of battle, or still live in the service of their country.

In 1812, just before the declaration of war, the corps of engineers was somewhat enlarged ; the Military Academy was at the same time greatly augmented, and much improved in its organization.* The academy was still made to embrace the corps of engineers ; and at the same time received, in addition to the teachers of French and of Drawing, a Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy, a Professor of Mathematics, and a Professor of Engineering, who were to be taken from the corps of engineers, or not, at the discretion of the President. The number of cadets for the different corps of artillery, cavalry, riflemen, and infantry, was limited to two hundred and fifty, which, joined to the ten cadets allowed to the corps of engineers by the law of 1802, made the full complement two hundred and sixty.† As this law of 1812 is the basis upon which the academy now stands, we shall quote a few of its leading provisions.

‘ The said corps [of cadets] shall be trained and taught all the duties of a private, noncommissioned officer, and officer ; be encamped at least three months of each year, and taught all the duties incident to a regular camp ; that the candidates for cadets be not under the age of fourteen, nor above the age of twentyone years ; that each cadet, previously to his appointment by the President of the United States, shall be well versed in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and that he shall sign articles, with the consent of his parent or guardian, by which he shall engage to serve four years, unless sooner discharged ; ’ ‘ that when any cadet shall receive a regular degree from the academical staff, after going through all the classes, he shall be considered among the candidates for a commission in any corps, according to the duties he may be judged competent to perform.’

In 1818, a chaplain was added to the academy, who was likewise to be Professor of Geography, History, and Ethics.

The foregoing are the main provisions relating to the Military Academy which we gather from the volume of laws before us. They do not descend to the minutæ of interior arrangement, and of course leave much to be done by those, who have the management of the institution. Such an establishment, upon an extended scale, was a new thing in this country, and we were

* Law of Congress, April 29, 1812.

† As we have now only three corps, in service, namely, of engineers, artillery, and infantry, all the graduates are commissioned in those corps.

either ignorant of the highly improved models of other countries, or did not choose to adopt their improvements. For four or five years after the law of 1812, and after the number of the cadets had been much increased, there appears to have been no established regulations as to the time of admission, or the length of the term of instruction.

In 1817, or the year following, many improvements were introduced; and the academy assumed that interior arrangement, as to classification, discipline, division of studies, &c. which has since given it such a high character for utility, and made admission into it a matter of competition throughout the United States. The time of entrance became fixed, as well as the term of instruction, and each candidate was required to pass through, not only an initial examination, but a probation of six months (at the end of which he is subjected to a second examination), before he could be entitled to receive a warrant. In the law requiring that each cadet should engage to serve for five years, four of these years were allotted to the term of instruction at the academy; and the whole number of cadets being divided into four classes, one class was to be admitted each year, to fill the place of the graduated class. Regulations were likewise established, determining the nature of the studies and the mode of instruction; each year receiving such allotment as best suited the classification, and the scale of improvement. Another regulation was likewise adopted, perhaps in a subsequent year, which has tended to make known more widely the merits of the institution, and has given the examinations a public and national character, greatly enhancing the value of the honors awarded. We allude to the *Board of Visitors*, constituted of 'a number of gentlemen, not less than five, distinguished for military and other sciences,' who are selected by the secretary of war, and who attend, at West Point, each annual examination. As the documents, which we have quoted, contain an able report from the board of visitors, who attended the examination of 1825, we shall avail ourselves of its interesting details, to present a brief view of the system of instruction pursued there, the results of which were so satisfactorily exhibited before them.

Following the order observed in the report, the first branch of study noticed is *Engineering*, in its two branches, military and civil. The highest commendation is bestowed by the board upon the proficiency evinced in these branches. When it is recollected, that the primary object of the institution was, and

probably still is, to make accomplished engineers, such high attainments in these respects furnish evidence that its first purposes are fulfilled. As we have now begun an extensive system of national defence, upon the proper accomplishment of which depends the economical expenditure of millions, and the future security of the country, it is all important that the best skill should be possessed by those, to whose charge the work is necessarily confided. But the demand for talent is not confined to military engineering only; the spirit of internal improvement, which is now awakening our whole country to enterprise, opens also a scope for civil engineering, whose limits it would be difficult to define. The large and complicated operations, which must result from this new era of opinion and resources, will require a range of science, which even this institution is not likely to surpass.

The next branch of study mentioned in the report is *Mineralogy*. This, however, appears to have been but recently introduced, and not as yet to have been pursued with much advantage. It is only a subordinate branch of the professorship of chemistry, and is without any public cabinet of minerals. The report most justly remarks, that mineralogy, connected with geology, is of great practical importance to the corps of engineers. Indeed, we should suppose that an acquaintance with these two sciences would more frequently enter into the operations of both the military and civil engineer, than that of chemistry, though all three are of unquestionable importance. We hope the recommendation of the board, with respect to the establishment of a cabinet of minerals, will meet with attention. Such a deficiency in that study defeats all useful purposes as much as if the chemist were without his crucibles and retorts. The law would seem to warrant the 'providing' of any such essential 'apparatus.'

The next branch embraces *Geography*, *History*, and *Ethics*. As these studies are all annexed to the office of chaplain, the incumbents of which had been changed during the year, no examinations were submitted to the board. It does not appear that these studies are largely attended to at any time. They form essential elements of a well instructed mind; so does literature in general; but as they are acquirements which can be made at all times and in all places, unassisted by professors and teachers, they can claim only subordinate attention at an institution, intended more particularly for those severe sciences and difficult arts, which are seldom compassed by unaided exertions.

We have not space to follow up the remarks of the board upon the departments of *Natural Philosophy* and *Chemistry*. It is well known that they are confided to professors of high reputation.

Drawing also forms an essential part of the instruction at West Point. Where natural aptitude assists the teacher, the greatest proficiency may be expected from the opportunity there afforded to the cadets for improvement in this art. The topography of our country is yet in its infancy, and there will long be abundant employment for this talent.

Of the branch of *Mathematics* the board remarks, that 'the condition of this department leaves nothing to desire.' This is bountiful praise, but no more, we presume, than is deserved. The rare degree of excellence attained by many of the graduates, in all the ramifications of this study, has been frequently attested by the most competent judges. It has, we have understood, been the opinion of some judicious men, that mathematics have occupied too much of the attention of the cadets, to the exclusion of studies of more practical importance. This question may be best settled by bringing into consideration the main objects of the institution. The primary object, as we have before observed, is to make accomplished engineers, and likewise to diffuse through all the departments of our military establishment those sciences, which are necessary to its efficiency and proper administration. If the mathematical proficiency, to which the cadets are urged, be greater than is required to fulfil these purposes, then the surplus time might be better appropriated. But this may well be questioned. The reach of science demanded by our engineering operations, both military and civil, for ascertaining boundaries, and making surveys, cannot easily be circumscribed. In the Polytechnic school in France, the cadets, being designated at their entrance for a particular branch, were instructed accordingly. But this is not the case at West Point, and any such distinction of studies there, would carry an invidious discrimination with it, that might operate very unfavorably upon the spirit of competition, which now pervades the whole body. This preliminary designation, while it offers some advantages, has many objections, which probably has prevented its introduction at West Point. The bent and power of the mind cannot easily be ascertained beforehand; a course of study alone brings them out; particularly the latter. Under the French rule, the range of selection is limited, and talents may often be misdi-

rected and lost. At West Point, on the contrary, the field of emulation is open to all; the designation does not take place until after a full developement of the various capacities and tastes of the students; and the best genius, and the most successful application, are thus likely to receive those appointments which are deemed the most honorable, and for which these prerequisites render them the most fit.

The *French language* is taught at the academy, and made, as it ought to be, an essential branch of instruction. Much weight should be given to the reasons advanced by the board, in favor of adding an assistant teacher to this department, who should be acquainted with the Latin and Spanish languages. If there are those in any of the classes, whose greater proficiency in all the prescribed studies leaves them leisure for attention to these additional studies, thereby preserving a previous knowledge of the Latin, and acquiring a new language which prevails over more than half our hemisphere, we should hope that the trifling increase of expense it might cause would be no obstacle.

Of the *Military instruction* at the academy, the board speaks in terms of high commendation. This embraces 'the system of infantry tactics established for the army of the United States, commencing with the elementary drill of the soldier, and including the school of the company; school of battalion, and evolutions of the line; the exercise and manœuvres of light infantry and riflemen; the duties in camp and garrison, of privates, non-commissioned officers, and officers, including those of guard and police.'* All those who have seen the military exercises of the battalion of cadets, will bear testimony that this regulation is well fulfilled. It is scarcely possible for any troops to attain the power of manœuvring with greater precision. The course of *Artillery instruction* embraces the 'nomenclature of the different parts of cannon, gun carriages, caissons, and their implements; exercise and manœuvres of field artillery; exercise of siege artillery, including the mortar and howitzer exercises; mechanical manœuvres; target practice with the gun, howitzer, and mortar; duties of the laboratory.'

We have not room for further enlargement upon this interesting subject. The institution has acquired a wide and honorable reputation, and is deservedly in favor both with the people and

* Regulations of the United States Military Academy at West Point.

the government. We shall finish with an extract from the report of the board, that gives some of the causes, that have produced this high character.

‘ The duty of the board of visiters, as prescribed by the fourteenth paragraph of the regulations of the academy, has seemed to demand of them some inquiry into the general system of means, by which the honorable and gratifying results, disclosed in the examination, have been attained.

‘ Much, no doubt, is to be ascribed to circumstances, in a high degree peculiar to this institution ; its immediate connexion with the Government of the United States ; the moral influence which this connexion imparts to the officers of instruction ; the natural situation of the academy on a spot extremely favorable to its purposes ; and the national spirit and character which pervade the institution. While, however, their due influence is ascribed to these causes, the board feel obliged to attribute the extensive acquisitions of the cadets to the skill and fidelity of the teachers, and to the judicious mode in which the classes are divided for instruction. As it would be impossible, on account of numbers, to teach a whole class collectively, each of the four classes is divided into convenient sections, according to the talents, previous acquirements, and ambition of the cadets. Whenever justice requires it, cadets are transferred from one section to another, and continual application is thus necessary, to maintain a distinguished character and place.

‘ To perfect the system of generous competition, the cadets, after each semiannual examination, are arranged on the roll, and take their seats, according to merit. In doing this, general conduct is considered, as well as progress in knowledge, so that every one, who aspires to distinction, is led to be vigilant over his daily deportment. It is also the custom each week to make a report of the best and the most deficient, in each section, and this report is transmitted to the Department of War. If, after a semiannual examination, any are found grossly deficient, they are turned back, to go over their courses again ; and if, at the next examination, they are still found wanting, they are dismissed from the institution. Great justice and impartiality are exercised, as far as the board could judge, in making out the Roll of Merit. The rank assigned to each cadet is the result of a trial publicly conducted, and the greatest publicity is given to this result, by printing and distributing the roll of cadets arranged according to merit. The influence of such a system, in exciting to honorable exertion, needs not to be enforced. The board are therefore of opinion, that the system of dividing into sections, according to

the relative capacity of the members of the classes, is practically excellent, and worthy of being carefully and vigorously maintained; and that public gratitude is due to the Superintendent of the academy, and to the Academic Staff, for having introduced so powerful, yet so simple an instrument of emulation and discipline, which requires only to be better known, in order to be universally adopted in our establishments for education.*

We have thus passed in rapid review the history of our army; our present system of fortifications; and the Military Academy at West Point. They are essentially connected and form parts of the same whole. Our national defences are no longer regarded with the prejudiced feelings of past days; they are not now looked upon as the creations of particular administrations or parties, arising out of a temporary policy, which is expected to change with the change of power; but as a settled system, founded on a true estimation of the permanent security and welfare of the country. It was said on the floor of Congress by an eminent member, 'that the system of national defence was as much an institution of the country, as the constitution itself.' It is no doubt true, that a proper and necessary degree of defence, as justly and imperiously demands the support of every patriot, as any other institution of the country. And there are at present few intelligent persons, who, whatever may be their wishes or hopes, can persuade themselves, that a nation, being in any degree tangible by its position or external relations, can maintain its interests, its honor, or its rights, without a proper system of general defence, or frequent wars.

Our present army is divided into artillery and infantry, and assigned for the protection of the maritime and interior frontier.

* The whole number of cadets who have been graduated at the Military Academy since its first establishment in 1802, up to July, 1825, is 428, of whom 338 have been graduated since 1812. Of the whole number, 261 are now in the army, forming more than half the number of its officers; 3 are in the civil service; 9 have been killed in battle; and 33 have died in service;—45 of the whole number have been attached to the corps of engineers; 249 to the artillery and ordnance; and 134 to other corps.

The public library at West Point contains about four thousand volumes, embracing the most approved works, both in French and in English, on fortifications, artillery, pyrotechny, the military art, military history, memoirs, campaigns, civil engineering, mathematics, natural history, astronomy, navigation, chemistry, mineralogy, the arts, geography, topography, history, biography, travels, miscellanies.

The artillery is necessarily broken into small detachments, corresponding with the number of fortifications. But it is the nature of that branch to act in detachments ; and there can be no obstacle to its acquiring the utmost skill requisite in garrison service ; and it will rarely be called upon to perform any other. Should the approach of war render it probable, that portions of it might be wanted in the field as light artillery, a few months' drill with horses would superadd the qualifications of that species of service, and give adequate efficiency for active operations.*

The infantry, from the different nature of its service, can be, and is, more concentrated. The Indians are held in check better by a few large bodies, than by many detachments. The policy of Mr Calhoun, in advancing far within the Indian country our cordon of posts, has been approved by experience ; and had his scheme been carried more fully into effect, the only Indian conflict we have since had, would probably have been avoided.

The time has past in the United States, when any just fears are entertained of such a standing army, as may be required by the present system of general defence. It is a gratuitous assumption, that the officers of the army are less identified with the country, have less interest in its institutions, and are less desirous of maintaining them, than any other class of citizens. The military establishments of most countries form an appendage of the crown ; and even in England, where they might be supposed to have a somewhat more popular character, foreign and colonial stations give the officers a peculiarity of feeling, which separates them in a degree from their fellow countrymen. But in our country, on the contrary, the army is dependant upon the people, and is mingled with them ; it participates in the same habits, imbibes the same sentiments, and regards itself in every respect as a part of the great community.

* An artillery school of practice was established about two years ago at Fortress Monroe, Old Point Comfort, Virginia, for the purpose of practically instructing the four regiments of artillery, successively, through a course of two years, in all the duties belonging to that branch. Like most of Mr Calhoun's plans, this had great utility in view. But there was not sufficient attention paid to preliminary details. The local situation of the school was ill chosen, or, at least, occupied too soon. It has resulted in a double interference ; the school interfering with the progress of the fortifications, and the progress of the fortifications interfering with the school.